



## **Template Drowsy Driving Language for State Driving Manual’s Curriculum, and Exam Questions**

### **Background**

Drowsy driving is common on U.S. roads and represents a highly pervasive threat to public health and transportation safety. Driving while drowsy can have the same consequences as driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Drowsiness can impair the ability to drive safely, even if the driver does not fall asleep. Drowsy driving usually occurs at high speeds making it difficult to avoid a crash. A recent AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety study showed 13% of crashes in which a person was hospitalized and 21% of crashes in which a person was killed involved a drowsy driver.

### **Manual**

After being awake for 18 hours straight, driving skills are the same as someone under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Driving drowsy can increase your crash risk. You often cannot react in time to apply brakes or steer away from a potential crash. Crashes related to drowsy driving can be very serious, leading to death or severe injuries.

If you drive while drowsy, you may become slower to respond to road and traffic conditions. You may struggle to process complex information coming from different places at once. You may become careless when making driving decisions, have trouble paying attention, or actually fall asleep while driving.

### **Signs that you are drowsy while driving include:**

- Falling asleep at stop lights;
- Yawning; rubbing eyes; watery eyes; heavy eyelids;
- Difficulty remembering the last few miles driven;
- Missing road signs or exits;
- Unplanned lane changes;
- Head nodding or dropping;
- Driving off the road or hitting the rumble strips.

### **Signs that another driver may be drowsy:**

- Head nodding or dropping, if driver is visible;
- Drifting out of the travel lane, crossing edge lines or center lines, hitting the rumble strips;
- Near miss crashes, especially rear end;
- Erratic driving behavior - speeding up/slowing down, weaving or drifting in lane;
- Rear-ending another vehicle or hitting another vehicle head-on;
- Hitting a stationary object;



**How to prevent drowsy driving:** The best way to reduce drowsiness is to get more sleep. If you are drowsy, don't drive. Pull over to a safe area as soon as you can and take a short nap. As little as 10-20 minutes of sleep can make a big difference. If possible, avoid driving during times you feel sleepy. For many people, this is in the early morning, during the late afternoon, or at night. Let a well-rested person drive. Consider carpooling, using public transportation, calling a taxi or asking a family member or friend to drive you.

**What does not work to prevent drowsy driving:** What does **NOT** work includes rolling down a window, chewing gum, or turning up the radio. Caffeine, coffee, energy drinks, and other stimulants are not reliable for staying alert. Talking on a cell phone or texting should also not be used as they are not reliable methods to stay awake.

**What to do if you observe a drowsy driver:** Most important: Maintain your own safety first, continuing to drive in a safe and responsible manner. Drowsy driving is a type of impaired driving and puts the driver and others on the roadway at risk for harm. Find a safe place to stop or have a passenger call 911 to report the situation. Be able to describe the location, the vehicle and the actions you observed. Be sure to follow any instructions you receive from the 911 dispatcher.

Every vehicle on the road and pedestrians are put in danger with just one drowsy driver. Among those most susceptible to driving while over-tired include shift workers, parents, individuals taking sedating medications, and those who have an untreated sleep disorder. Although, anyone can make the fatal mistake of driving without adequate rest, young adults are at the highest risk, comprising a disproportionately large number of fatigue related crashes (64% for those age 16-29).

### **Curriculum Requirements**

Students will recognize drowsiness and its effects on driving and how to reduce these effects.

#### Proficient Level Knowledge Base Indicators – Instructional Examples

The student will:

1. Recognize the signs of drowsy driving
2. Understand the consequences of drowsy driving
3. Comprehend how young adults are at the highest risk, comprising a disproportionately large number of fatigue related crashes
4. Learn how to prevent or address drowsiness while driving



The teacher will:

1. Provide information about the signs of drowsy driving
2. Describe the effects of drowsy driving
3. Tell ways to reduce drowsiness while driving
4. May utilize multimedia to aide in discussion, i.e., videos, DVDs, VHS, CDs, simulation (role playing)

**Exam Questions**

If you are driving and you feel drowsy, which of the following should you do to reduce the risk of a crash? Choose the best single answer:

- A. Turn on your car radio
- B. Slow down so you can react better
- C. Pull over to a safe place as soon as possible and take a short nap

**Correct Answer: C**

Which of the following are signs of drowsy driving?

- A. Traveling faster than the speed limit
- B. Getting lost and asking for directions
- C. Hitting rumble strips

**Correct Answer: C**